

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1 through 19 (cancelled).

Claim 20 (currently amended): A latch assembly according to claim 18 21 wherein at least one of said one or more handle retention members is depressible.

Claim 21 (currently amended): A latch assembly according to claim 18 comprising:
2 a latch housing having first and second chambers and a recessed portion
between said first and second chambers,
4 a retainer unit at least partially housed in said first chamber,
a handle pivotally connected to said retainer unit and housed at least partially
6 inside said recessed portion when pivoted to a closed position,
a push button unit intermediate between said second chamber and said handle,
8 one or more handle retention members intermediate said push button unit and
said handle when in the closed position,
10 an engagement surface intermediate said push button unit and said handle and
engaged with said one or more handle retention members when in the
12 closed position, and
a compression spring housed in said second chamber biasing said push button

¹⁴ unit in an upward direction, wherein said push button unit may be rotated.

Claim 22 (currently amended): A latch assembly according to claim 21 wherein said push button unit is operated by a specially designed key.

Claim 23 (currently amended): A latch assembly according to claim 18 21 further comprising a torsion spring between said retainer unit and said handle for urging said handle in an upward direction.

Claims 24 through 37 (cancelled).

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

This preliminary amendment is being filed concurrently with the utility application prior to any action taken by the Patent Office on the application herein and introduces no new matter.

With respect to these outstanding claims, the Patent Examiner in the Office action dated April 3, 2002 during the prosecution of the parent rejected these claims under 35 U.S.C § 102(b) taking the position that claims 18, 20 and 23 are unpatentable over **Yamada** (U.S. Patent No. 5,469,725), and further taking the position that claims 18 and 20-23 are unpatentable over **Clavin** (U.S. Patent No. 5,638,709).